

TALENT HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

JANUARY, 1999

OFFICERS SELECTED The new officers for the Talent Historical Society were named in November by the Society Board in accordance with the provisions of the Society bylaws. Elected President for 1999 was Alice Burnett, long time member of the Society. She is joined by Vice-President Myrna Holden; Secretary Katherine Harris, and Treasurer Bud Gleim. The Board members for 1998-1999 include the following: Bob Casebeer, Lynn Newbry, Helen Seiber, and Betty Welburn. Rosemary Bevel has been named Registrar, and Yvonne Reynolds holds the Historian post.

SOCIETY DIRECTOR RESIGNS; SEARCH ON Holly Hertel, Museum Director, resigned at the end of October and after revising the Museum Director job description, the Board advertised for applicants to fill the position. About fifteen applicants filed with the Society for the position; some seven were selected to be interviewed by the Search Committee. The Committee will interview the selected applicants during the week of January 10, and the Board will confirm the nominee at the February Board meeting.

TENTATIVE EXPANSION PLANS REVIEWED The Board has received an informal proposal from Pressure Plus, a design and development company in Medford, for the renovation of the basement area in the Talent Community Center as an expanded office of the Society. The basic problem with the area, which at one time served as the public library for Talent, is water seepage. If the Board decides proceed with expansion at this location the following renovations will need to be performed according to the proposal:

- locate and dismantle all existing above ground and sub grade utilities attached to the building.
- excavate the perimeter of the existing block wall to expose block and footings.
- Part of west wall must be waterproffed from the inside as outside is not accessible.
- Sandblast existing exterior walls to removed waterproof coatings; prepare surface for membrane.
- Install termination flashing.
- Prime walls to be waterproffed.
- Apply liquid membrane.
- Backfill excavation to within 16 inches of grade with $\frac{3}{4}$ minus drain rock.
- Backfill remainder of excavation to grade with topsoil.
- Remove existing wood framed office and wall paneling from interior walls to exposed block wall.
- Chemical strip wall to remove paint; sandblast wall to remove any remaining paint and debris.

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- Repair all cracks as necessary.
- Apply Zypex crystallization waterproofing to cleaned wall and repaired cracks.

The approximate cost for this renovation would be about \$11,770 plus applicable permits. This estimate does not include the re-construction of the stairs or office area. The physical dimen-

sions of the basement space are 22' x 60'. The ceiling is eight foot. The area is about three times larger than the present space. The proposal is informal and the Board solicited it for information purposes only. The Board has not, repeat not, committed the Society to the renovation of the basement area.

BUDGET REQUEST The Board approved the annual budget request that is submitted to Jackson County via the Jackson County Historical Society program funding community museums at its December meeting. The total sum requested was \$24,965 for the 1999-2000 fiscal year. The major items include payroll expenses (\$15,485), office supplies (\$950), insurance (\$800), rent (\$900), utilities (\$720), and professional consulting, legal and audit services (\$1500), and maintenance and office equipment services. No response has yet been received from the two agencies that distribute these essential funds.

TALENT NEWS FLASH Long time Talent residents will recall that a mimeo-
BEING MICROFILMED graphed weekly newspaper was published by May Lowe and Alice Burnett. Copies of the Talent News Flash that are in the possession of the Talent Historical Society are being microfilmed by the University of Oregon School of Journalism for permanent storage and use. The Society plans to record the Talent News Flash issues on the computer files maintained by the Society here in Talent. Copies of the microfilms will be made available to the Jackson County Library, Southern Oregon University, and the Jackson County Historical Society. Residents who have copies of the Talent News Flash stored away should contact the Society office and provide the dates of the issues for the Society does not have complete files of these unique historical documents.

ORAL HISTORY HEARD Yvonne Reynolds, Society Volunteer Historian, has recently secured six oral histories from area residents. Awaiting transcription from the audio tapes are the interviews of Kenneth Beebe, Wilda Schmelzer, Leola Conner, David Knott, Betty Welburn and Gloria Wood.

WATER WORKS A ten thousand word history of Talent's water and sewer system efforts has been submitted by Yvonne Reynolds for review and editing to the Registrar, Rosemary Bevel, of the Historical Acquisitions Committee. When completed and recorded on computer disks this document will be available for patrons of the Society and researchers. Grant writers seeking historical data will now find the essential historical background material collected in one document rather than buried in the archives of the City of Talent.

BELL HOUSE UPDATE Talent residents buying groceries at Rick's Market have all noticed the renovation of the older house located just north of the market's parking lot, the house that most recently housed a counseling service and formerly was home to the Talent Insurance Agency. That house is the Bell House and is being restored to a semblance of its original state.

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OFFICE MANAGER Lisa Overton, Talent Historical Society Office Manager, the

COMPLETES YEAR key person who handles all the essential details that keep the Society operating, has complete a full year with the Society. Lisa, a Baker County product, is a student in psychology at Southern Oregon University and works at the Society offices three afternoons a week. She is currently providing liason for the Society's auditor as the annual fiscal review process is now in full swing. Miss Overton was commended by the THS Board for her excellent service to the Society during the year she has served as Office Manager. She has provided yoeman, or is that yoewomon, service since November when the former Museum Director, Holly Hertel, resigned.

COMMITTEES SET Talent Historical Society President Alice Burnett has appointed the 1999 committee members. The committees and their appointed members are listed below:

Budget -- K. Harris, B. Gleim, R. Logan, M. Holden, L. Overton, A. Burnett

Membership -- B. Welburn, R. Logan, R. Bevel

Sales Shoppe -- M. Holden, H. Seiber

Personnel Liaison -- M. Holden

Historical Acquisition -- R. Bevel, Y. Reynolds, K. Harris, L. Newbry

Telephone -- Barbara Smith, Virginia and Bill Manary, A. Burnett

Newsletter -- B. Casebeer

New Site -- H. Seiber, L. Newbry

Review of Annual Meeting -- R. Bevel, K. Harris

Community Center Anniversary -- To be announced.

MUSEUM ASSOCIATION TO MEET The February meeting of Jackson Community Historical Museum Association will be hosted by the Talent Historical Society. Community Museum staff members and patrons of local historical societies will meet Thursday, February 25, 1999, from 10:00 a. m., to 12:00 noon in either the Talent Public Library or in the adjacent Community Center. Call 512-8838 about a week before the meeting to confirm the exact location. Interested community members are welcome to attend.

HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS SOUGHT The Talent Historical Society seeks historical documents and artifacts that members of the Talent or neighboring communities may have that bear on the history of Talent and the neighboring hinterland. Our neighboring community of Phoenix also has an historical society and no doubt would appreciate receiving similar documents and artifacts that focus specifically on Phoenix. Such documents need not be extremely old. For example, the Society just received an original home economics project from Talent High School (Yes, newcomers, prior to the 1960s Talent had a high school which merged with Phoenix and that is why the school district is called the Talent-Phoenix School District.). The project was A Clothing Budget for a High School Girl and was created by Margaret Hamilton in 1925. Comprised of illustrations from clothing publications, the compilation itemizes all the garments a girl would then need to be properly clothed: capes, jackets, party dresses, daily dresses, hats, sports outfits, shoes and hose, nightgowns, underwear (today we would say itimates!), accessories, etc. Prices were listed and the total reached \$76.70--less than what a good winter coot would cost today!

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EDITORIAL -- "FADING PHOTOGRAPHS"

The fog of memory clouds those moments that mark significance--birth, schooling, courtship, marriage, military duty, work, triumph, illness and death as one generation moves into another. Much of what aged primates know dies with them--monkeys as well as humans. We humans try to preserve the things that matter to us--objects, documents and memories. I once read about an aged woman packing objects to take to a nursing home, and she included an empty, tinned box. Asked by her daughter why she wanted to take the empty box, the aging mother told her that whenever something precious happened in their family, she and her now-buried husband would ritually open the box and imaginatively place the memory of that treasured event inside--no paper, no photograph, just the thought itself! The lady was definitely not going to leave behind her memories when she moved to the needed nursing home.

Objects and memories! We humans have always tried to preserve them. Dramatic and forceful pictures of animals and peoples' red-ochered hands lie deep in French and Spanish caves, created by our ancestors who lived out their lives two ice ages ago! Egyptian hieroglyphics decorate temples and massive monuments which lie buried in the windswept sands of the Sahara in Southern Egypt, mute evidence of the human attempt to save a present moment, to lock in stone their hopes and dreams and aspirations and their world of gods. In China, ancient bamboo strips, stained with ink or blood, are so old that only a dozen of today's most dedicated Chinese scholars can piece together what those age-old Chinese recorded. Scraps of leather, fragments of papyrus, rolls of corroded copper have been pulled from the desert caves in Israel, recording the peculiarities of the 2200 year old Essene sect. *Beowulf*, the oldest piece of British literature we possess, was preserved for today's readers because one copy, and only one copy, managed to survive the rain, and wind, and war, and flames, that swept back and forth across the British Isles for 1300 or so years. The Greek plays that still draw audiences and are used to teach today's students about the "glory that was Greece" exist only because rain is so rare in Egypt, for most of the Greek literature was dug out of 2300 year old landfills, the dumps of Alexander the Great's Greek Egypt--some of the documents were saved because Egyptian morticians needed carton-age to stuff crocodile mummies to honor one of the gods of the Nile.

And we, today, who often do not know the names of our great-grandparents, much less their hopes, fears and aspirations or even something much more simple like the color of their hair or eyes--we use photographs and ink, printed on acid-free archival paper one might hope, to preserve the swiftly receding past. Those albums, boxes, envelopes and chests of photographs and letters lie hidden away in attics, desks, shelves, bureaus, chests and boxes. The pictures of doting mothers, playing infants, awe-struck lovers, proud fathers, and doting grandparents lie there quietly as the chemicals change slowly, inexorably. Our fading photographs, and fading letters, try to preserve our fading past . . . and they are fading fast!

NOTE: The Talent Historical Society only exists to attempt the preservation of such "fading memories." We, the Society and board members, need the help of the community in this monumental effort. What kind of help? In an attempt to preserve the past, one must preserve the cultural memories of a community. Such memories are locked up in scrapbooks, in letters, in photograph albums, in minds (available to the rest of us as stories and interviews), in video-tapes, in tape recordings, and in material objects themselves (like the Wagner Creek School's wood-burning cookstove recently donated by Rosemary Beveridge to the Society). We welcome the community's help in our preservation attempts.

OTHER NOTES: Talent's Rapp Family was featured in Jackson County Historical Society's January magazine. Titled "Roadside History--The Rapps of Rapp Road", the article is well worth reading. Written by Mary Louise Lyman, the feature gives a history of the Rapp family, and the impact Joseph Rapp and his descendents have had on Talent development and history.

Join your historical society today--call 535-8838 .